

# A plane delay... seen from an academic perspective (part 1)

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By **João** on May 13, 2013 at 10:00 am

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Some months ago, I travelled to work with Martin Quinn in a joint paper. At the airport, upon the boarding warning, everyone gathered at the gate. But someone warned that boarding would not happen straight away, and the crowd started to disperse – and I just followed the crowd and took a seat. Later, a new boarding announcement – and another long wait, and a new announcement that boarding would only be made more than 1 hour later. This time, however, the announcement included an invitation to go to the nearest café to get some food and drinks.

Needless to say, the crowd was quite efficient in rushing to the café. The choice was (as expected!) rather limited; I certainly did not get the caviar-based menu! Later, as I finally boarded, I learned that a plane had been brought from Barcelona, since the problem in the door of the previous plane could not be readily fixed.

Four days later, I received this email from the airline company:

“Dear JOAO OLIVEIRA,

We are writing to say how sorry we are for the delay to your flight (...). Regrettably this was caused by a technical issue with the aircraft. As a result of this we had to arrange for an alternative aircraft so that we could continue with your service.

Safety is our number one priority and we work hard to ensure that all our aircraft are maintained to a high standard. Unfortunately from time to time technical faults do occur and we always take immediate action to address any issues which on this occasion has meant a delay to your flight.

We recognise the inconvenience that this will have caused you and would like to assure you that we strive hard to provide the best possible service to all of our customers and hope that you will give us another chance in the future.

Yours sincerely,

(...) Customer Services

As part of our continual improvement programme we would like your feedback regarding how the delay was handled by our airport staff. If you wish to participate in this please [click here](#).”

Why this story? It allows identifying, directly or indirectly, various types of Costs of Quality, analysed in chapter 20. Have a go and identify them, and check [next week's post](#) for my view on this!